

**SATR Presentation on the Strategic Framework and Structure of the  
Presidential Task Force on Climate Change (PTFCC)**

19 October 2007 – Press Conference

By now, you must all have at least some level of basic awareness on the issue of climate change and global warming.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and former US Vice President Al Gore have done such a good job of raising global consciousness on the issue that they have recently been declared co-awardees of the Nobel Peace Prize. Now, with Leonardo de Caprio adding another irresistible voice of concern, the alarm bells regarding the fate of our planet seem all the more audible—particularly among the ladies...

But make no mistake about it: climate change is a serious global problem. The question is, how would it impact the Philippines? Should we be worried? And, if so, is there anything we can do about it?

Scientific studies indicate that as a country we contribute very little by way of greenhouse gas emissions which give rise to global warming. Ironically, our archipelago—by reason of terrain and location—is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

From your handouts, you would note that nature has given us fair warning these past several decades in the form of warming and precipitation trends, the frequency and intensity of typhoons, the occurrence of devastating floods and landslides, the alternation of severe El Niño and La Niña events, and the seasonal outbreak of health hazards like dengue and red tide.

If these adverse trends worsen, our food and water supply, along with the health, livelihood and settlements of some communities, could soon be at risk.

To assess the magnitude and proximity of the threat and to mount an appropriate and cohesive response, the President issued Administrative Order (AO) 171, creating the Presidential Task Force on Climate Change (PTFCC), earlier this year.

The Task Force is chaired by the Secretary of Energy, with the Environment and Natural Resources Secretary as Vice-Chair. The rest of the PTFCC is made up of the heads of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Education (DepEd), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), along with two representatives from the private sector and civil society.

Operations of the Task Force are premised on a set of principles. First, they have to be aligned with the global action agenda on climate change. Second, they should be comprehensive and holistic in character—involving the total community, including the bureaucracy. As such, they should serve to synchronize currently disparate efforts across disciplines, agencies and sectors under one common strategy for maximum impact. To facilitate program or project initiation and implementation, there will be a strong bias for local efforts and interventions.

The Task Force convened for the second time this morning primarily to validate its climate change response framework and to map out the road ahead.

The core of the response framework hinges on a critical balance between mitigation and adaptation measures. Both are critical in addressing the current and imminent risks brought about by climate change.

While the Philippines might not contribute significantly to total greenhouse gas emissions, it has to do its share in mitigating climate change as part of the global community. On this score, the DOE, in collaboration with the members of the Task Force, will take decisive action, for instance, to achieve the climate-friendly energy supply mix.

At the same time, the Task Force will design adaptation responses to address vulnerabilities of specific sectors and areas. Focus will be on disaster-prone settlements, high-risk population centers, and food production areas.

In view of the magnitude of the challenge, the country would need to harness financial resources and technology solutions to address the causes and effects of climate change.

Recognizing the massive infrastructure and technical requirements to pursue its twin goals, the Task Force is committed to search for financing mechanisms in support of local and sectoral initiatives. These include ODA funds, market-based incentives, subsidies targeted at lowering costs for power generation using solar, wind and other clean technologies, and innovative lending schemes.

To carry out mitigation strategies, local communities would need access to climate-friendly technologies to establish low-carbon infrastructure for transportation, energy, agriculture, industry, and settlements. On the adaptation side, farmers, for instance, would need to be introduced to technologies for developing drought-resistant crops and the like. The Task

Force will facilitate transfer of technology through bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements.

The enabling interventions on the financial and technology fronts would enhance the capacity of the Task Force to rally stakeholders from diverse sectors around its core advocacy. By addressing the main constraints to effective mitigation and adaptation responses, it can focus on social mobilization as a key strategy to achieve the critical mass necessary for maximum impact.

In the months to come, we intend to engage various clusters of stakeholders—from home and office builders to local government officials, from car manufacturers to mall owners, from appliance makers to the academe—to assemble a critical mass of climate change response advocates who can make a genuine difference.

We expect widespread social mobilization to yield benefits on several fronts:

- First, we can look forward to effective governance of the Philippine climate change response by setting in place the right policy environment and a system for tracking the progress of multi-agency efforts to plug vulnerabilities.
- Second, pro-action and cooperation among diverse stakeholders would ensure a unified and coherent national response.
- Third, ordinary citizens would be more open to adopting lifestyle changes, which can help in reducing carbon emissions.
- On the international level, Philippine stakeholders, working in concert, can highlight the urgent need for industrialized states to fulfill their mitigation commitments so as to avert devastation and dislocation in their home land.

To be consistent with its response framework, the Task Force has made a few refinements in its organization.

First, the PTFCC Chair and Vice Chair would enjoy the benefit of counsel on matters like technology solutions, financing schemes and social mobilization strategies from a Board of Advisors.

Day-to-day operations will be handled by a Climate Change Office. Headed by an Executive Director, this office will handle policy development, project monitoring and evaluation, information and education, and administrative support.

All the Task Force members will be involved directly in program planning and implementation. In keeping with the principles stated earlier, we have opted not to group programs along functional areas. Instead, cross-sectoral PTFCC flagship programs will be classified into four areas—mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology—consistent with the proposed climate change response framework.